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ABSTRACT

In an effort to meet the new challenges for improving teacher education and student learning in P-12 schools in New York, and to develop a shared vision among partners of a National Council for Accreditation in Teacher Education (NCATE) conceptual framework, the faculty and staff of a school of education in New York conducted a school-college action research project to determine what is important to its partners in the preparation of "quality" teachers for the future. Data were collected from 123 partners who were invited to participate in the development of the conceptual framework. Over 4 months, six 2-hour focus groups were conducted, and participants completed questionnaires. Findings show that the College's internal and external partners share a vision of a teacher who is professionally confident, can write and speak English fluently, is compassionate, and is one who possesses in-depth knowledge of content and pedagogy. An updated version of the conceptual framework has been submitted to the NCATE as a step toward the development of a vision of a quality teacher. An appendix contains three illustrative figures. (Contains 14 references.) (Author/SLD)

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School-College Partners: Action Research and Focus-Group Findings On What is Important in Preparing Quality Teachers

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April 21, 2003

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School-College Partners: Action Research and Focus-Group Findings On What is Important in Preparing Quality Teachers

Introduction and Background Information

In 1998, the New York State Board of Regents adopted and enacted a plan to reform teacher education in New York State (New York State Board of Regents Task Force on Teaching, 1998). The plan sets forth requirements for the way New York State recruits, prepares, certifies and continues to educate teachers and other school personnel (i.e., administrators and counselors). Included in the plan was a set of higher standards and regulations for teacher education programs and the institutions that house such programs. To ensure that higher-education institutions meet the new standards, the Board of Regents mandated that all New York colleges and universities achieve accreditation status for their teacher education programs by December 31, 2004. Accreditation of the education programs must be through a professional accrediting agency that has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education and the Board of Regents. New York State has sanctioned either one of two routes for its colleges and universities to pursue: One route is by NCATE -- National Council for Accreditation in Teacher Education which is now in a partnership arrangement with the State, and the other route is entitled RATE -- Regents Accreditation of Teacher Education. The NCATE-accrediting process requires that the Unit of an institution that is designated as having primary responsibility for the education programs as well as the institution itself demonstrate its capacity to educate "quality" teachers and education leaders. In essence, the State has required all of its higher-education institutions to be accountable to the citizens of New York by demonstrating their capacity and effectiveness to prepare "quality" teachers and administrators in the 21st century.

There are six NCATE standards with accompanying rubrics and assessment criteria that measure the effectiveness of the education programs and the institution (see NCATE, 2002). Two of the six standards focus on a teacher candidate's competence in areas that require him or her to demonstrate knowledge of the content and the skill to teach it to pupils. The other four standards focus on the institution's effectiveness and capacity to educate candidates at initial and advanced levels of the programs. One of the four standards emphasizes field experiences and the clinical portions of the teacher education programs. The standard requires substantial collaboration among and between school and college personnel. Generally speaking, the NCATE accreditation process emphasizes performance-based teacher education as well as

outcome-based measures that provide evidence of what an institution's education candidates know and are able to do. This process represents a dramatic shift for accrediting agents. They now must make judgments based on outcome measures (i.e., candidate performances) rather than input measures (i.e., course syllabi and content)

In June of 2001, many of the New York colleges and universities selected NCATE as their accrediting agency. This occurrence is not unlike what has happened in other states around the nation. NCATE in the last few years has formed many new state partnerships, and it has been selected by a number colleges and universities independent of their state's decision to partner with NCATE. As a federally approved and nationally recognized accrediting body, NCATE requires that an institution engage in a rigorous process to meet the six standards to achieve accreditation for its programs. To ensure the achievement of the standards, New York State and NCATE have advocated a three-way partnership arrangement between and among the faculties of (1) arts and sciences, (2) education and (3) faculties in P-12 schools. This new system of education and plan for reform attempts to align teacher education standards with learning standards for students in P-12 schools. The plan is similar to those plans proposed and acted upon by such states as Georgia, Maryland and Ohio (see Zimpher, 1999 for an explanation of the states' plans). The objectives of the new plan are directed at having teacher education candidates acquire and demonstrate a broad background in the arts and sciences along with the demonstration of their knowledge of content, and their ability to teach it (pedagogical content knowledge). The ultimate goal is to improve student learning in P-12 schools and to assure excellence and quality in the preparation of teachers and administrators in New York State through a collaborative P-16 system.

In addition to working together to implement the new standards, it is most important that school and college personnel collaborate for the development of a **conceptual framework** for the Unit (i.e., a school education) and its programs. An NCATE conceptual framework is a document that presents a shared vision for the programs that prepare teachers and administrators to work in P-12 schools. The shared vision is arrived at by faculties of education in collaboration with representatives from the arts and sciences and partnering school districts (i.e., cooperating teachers and administrators). The conceptual framework is a coherent and knowledge-based document that provides direction for all of the Unit's programs, courses, and field work engaged in by the candidates of the programs. It determines the skills and knowledge candidates must

demonstrate. And it provides direction for faculties to conduct their scholarly works, research and service to the professional community (see NCATE, 2002 for an in-depth explanation of a conceptual framework).

Purposes of the Research Project and Methodology

Thus, in an effort to meet the new challenges for (1) improving teacher education concurrent with improving student learning in P-12 schools, and (2) developing a shared vision among partners for an NCATE-conceptual framework, the faculty and staff of a School of Education (SOE) at a College in New York conducted a school-college action research project to determine what is important to its partners in the preparation of "quality" teachers for the future. More specifically, the two major **purposes** of the action research project are:

1. To determine the knowledge, skills, traits and learning experiences that are important to the College's internal partners (i.e., adjunct instructors of courses, seminar leaders and supervisors of student teachers) and external partners (i.e., cooperating teachers, principals, and members of an advisory council) in the preparation of quality teachers.
2. To identify and target areas for programmatic and institutional change and improvement.

Action research methodology coupled with focus group techniques and a follow-up questionnaire constituted the component parts of the research strategy employed by researchers to collect and analyze data. Data were collected from 123 partners (N=123) who were invited to participate in the development of the conceptual framework. Over a period of four months, six two-hour focus-group sessions were conducted with the SOE's partners. At each of the six focus-group sessions the following materials were given to the attendees: (1) a two-sided preliminary conceptual-framework flyer containing pertinent information about the SOE's expressed vision for the Unit and teacher education (see Figure 1 in Appendix A); (2) a ten-item questionnaire (see Figure 2 in Appendix A); and (3) a packet of information about NCATE and its accreditation process. Three to six focus questions were selected from the ten-item questionnaire to provoke discussion during the focus-group sessions. Notes regarding responses to questions and key points made during group discussions were recorded and later analyzed by the project's coordinator and an assistant to the coordinator. The project's coordinator served as the principal researcher of the project and moderator for the focus groups. After five of the six focus-group sessions the same ten-item questionnaire, with space provided for written responses, was mailed

to all partners who were invited to the sessions. The items on the questionnaire solicited comments, priorities, and opinions from the internal and external partners of the SOE. Cited below are samples of the focus questions that were asked by the moderator during group sessions and the questions that appeared on the follow-up questionnaire.

1. What entrance criteria should we use to admit students to the teacher education programs?
2. What are the prerequisites to student teaching?
3. What specifically must a student teacher be able to do in order to be successful in your classroom with your students? And what must a student teacher do to successfully complete a student teaching experience.
4. In your opinion, what are the most important factors that influence P-12 student learning? What is the role of the principal in facilitating student learning? What is the role of the college supervisor in facilitating student learning?
5. What are five skills, abilities and/or traits that are most important for the next generation of teachers to develop and why?
6. What do students need to develop in order to function successfully in this century?
7. What criteria or standards should we use to select
   (a) our partner schools?
   (b) cooperating teachers?
   (c) school principals?
   (d) college supervisors?
   (e) our part-time college teacher education instructors?
8. What expectations do you have of the College in a partnership endeavor?

Conceptually, the responses from all of the focus-group discussions as well as written responses to items on the questionnaire clustered around **four major categories**:

A. Skills, traits, and knowledge teacher candidates and P-12 students need to develop and demonstrate.
B. General and specific learning experiences the Unit's education programs need to provide to its candidates.
C. Critical factors that influence teacher-candidate learning and P-12 student learning.
D. Programmatic and/or institutional changes that need to made in order to improve teacher education.

The frequency or repetitiveness of a response within and across groups of partners -- i.e., cooperating teachers, principals, college supervisors, adjunct instructors, etc. -- were noted. For example, it was noted from discussions as well as from written responses that participants of this research project repeatedly identified the "ability to speak and write English fluently" as a priority-skill teacher candidates need to develop and demonstrate to be effective teachers. This

was not only the case within groups, i.e., cooperating teachers, but also across cross groups, i.e., school principals, College supervisors, teachers, and instructors of courses.

To reiterate, the major thrust of this collaborative action research endeavor is to systematically collect and analyze data in order to (1) arrive at a shared vision among school and college personnel for the preparation of quality teachers and administrators; (2) develop a functional conceptual framework; and (3) target areas for programmatic and/or institutional change and improvement. Ultimately, we want our decisions to be based on our findings and on the judgment and wisdom of our professional community.

The project's coordinator used a focus-group format and technique (Agar & McDonald, 1995; Morgan, 1997) along with a follow-up, ten-item questionnaire to collect relevant data from the aforementioned partners. Focus groups are used extensively in marketing research since the 1950s (Catterall & Maclaran, 1997) and they are now used in education and educational research. Education officials of the State of Georgia and faculty members from the University of Georgia in their G-step program have used focus groups quite effectively to solicit information from their regional school partners for improving teacher education (see Butchart, Castenell, DeMarrais, Hensley, & Hudson-Ross, 2002). The technique has been used successfully to obtain relevant information from school personnel. Also, action research has been used in school-college partnership programs and, in particular, in studies conducted by the major author of the paper (see Catelli, 1995; Catelli & Carlino, 2001; and Catelli, Padovano, & Costello, 2000). Thus, collaborative action research as an overall methodological strategy is an appropriate one for accomplishing the purposes of the research project and focus groups are an effective means for obtaining relevant information from individuals.

What Did We Find? – Sample Findings

For purposes of this paper, the author will focus on the skills, traits, and knowledge that quality teachers need to develop and demonstrate (Question #5, Category A); and the programmatic changes that need to occur in order to improve teacher education at the College. The author will highlight in this section selected findings and comment on those program changes that were either recommended by the participants during focus groups or extracted from data on the questionnaires.

Preliminary findings reveal that in sample responses to the question -- What are five skills and/or traits that are most important for the next generation of teachers to develop and

demonstrate -- both internal and external partners repeatedly identified the following as most important (see Figure 3 in Appendix A) :

- **The ability to speak and write English fluently.**
- **Professional confidence.**
- **The ability to present oneself in an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and self-assured or confident manner.**
- **A good work ethic.**
- **Be able to work with all students from diverse backgrounds.**
- **An ability to communicate content effectively.**
- **Be or become conversant with newer technologies.**
- **Demonstrate a passion for teaching, and a genuine respect and love for students.**
- **Be responsible and professionally dedicated.**
- **Be compassionate.**

These traits or areas of competence were also identified by our partners as important areas of change and improvement for the teacher education programs. That is, participants during focus group sessions made explicit comments that the College and its partners should develop and coordinate educational experiences and assessment strategies that directly assist teacher candidates in the development of such traits and skills — with the College assuming more responsibility for seeing that it is accomplished at the initial levels of teacher certification. Further, participants clearly asserted that more needs to be done programmatically in the design of specific courses that will enable the institution's candidates to develop such skills as well as opportunities to demonstrate that such skills and traits have been developed by the candidates. First, more field and clinical experiences, and second, more opportunities for school and college faculties to coordinate the field experiences were the key recommendations put forth by both internal and external partners.

It was unclear as to the extent to which school personnel (i.e., cooperating teachers, principals, etc.) should be or wanted to be responsible for the teacher candidates' development of the traits and areas of competence listed above. And it was unclear as to the specific role they (school personnel) wanted to assume in these matters. These are certainly areas that require further discussion and investigation.

It should be noted, however, that the most frequently cited skills by internal and external partners were *written and oral communication skills.* Both internal and external partners stated that the next generation of "quality" teachers needs to demonstrate that they are able to *write and speak English fluently* – regardless of their native-born status. They need, as many voiced, to be exemplary in this area.

It appeared that *compassion* was a trait or attribute commented on frequently in those focus groups held with internal partners (i.e., the College's adjunct instructors of courses, supervisors of student teachers, and seminar leaders, etc.). This was not a surprise finding. The College's emblem which appears on its letterhead has the words "learning," "wisdom," and "compassion" highlighted. It should be noted that one of the focus groups consisted of special educators who are our internal partners for the teacher education programs in special education. Many participants from other focus groups elaborated on their responses with regard to compassion by describing the complexities of world situations, and by highlighting the enormous increase in the numbers of culturally diverse, physically disabled, and economically disadvantaged students found in American classrooms today. From their perspective, American classrooms in the next two decades require that teachers show compassion in their interactions with students. The teacher's ability to *work with diverse student populations* was cited often, and it was frequently connected to candidates becoming *caring* and *compassionate* teachers.

Although not cited as most important, participants suggested that teacher candidates should have (1) in-depth knowledge of the "content" they teach, and (2) be effective "managers" of today's classroom. These responses were expected and anticipated. Much of what has been found in reports on teacher education has identified content knowledge and pedagogy (the ability to teach content) as important to improving teacher preparation. It was the moderator's impression that participants assumed that candidates would possess these skills and knowledge by the end of the program, and that attention to these two areas had already been given by the larger education community. However, participants felt strongly that there needs to be more cooperation between the College and school districts for candidates to acquire basic classroom management skills. They did assert that this was a recommendation that had been communicated many times in the past but had never been realized. These comments were of no surprise to College representatives.

What was surprising to College representatives is that participants often expressed that teacher candidates in general and more specifically the College's candidates lack *professional confidence* in classrooms with students and in other professional circumstances (i.e., interviews for teaching positions, oral presentations in courses at the College). When the moderator probed for more information, participants commented that -- based on their experiences they had found that both undergraduate and graduate teacher candidates lacked "professional confidence" in classrooms – with the graduate teacher candidates seemingly to lack more in K-12 classrooms than undergraduate teacher candidates. This situation may be a result of the present program which requires undergraduate teacher candidates to have two more classroom field experiences than graduate candidates. New State regulations mandate more field work in classrooms for all candidates at the initial levels of teacher certification. Thus, the concern expressed by many participants may be, to some degree, corrected in the future. However, the point here is that according to our internal and external partners, all teacher candidates need to develop and demonstrate a higher level of teaching confidence in the classroom which, in their terms, will ensure K-12 student learning. This notion was elaborated on by participants in more than one focus group and it appeared as responses to items on the questionnaire.

Also, it is worth mentioning that the findings of another action research study conducted by the College and six of its partnering elementary schools revealed that student teachers, during videotaped lessons, individually and as a group, had low occurrences and low-to moderate ratings for the following pedagogical moves (see Catelli & Carlino, 2001 and Catelli, Carlino, & Longley, 2002 for a complete explanation of the school-college action research study):

Asking Higher-Order Questions (i.e., application, inferential, analytic, evaluative and synthesis-type questions)

Using or Extending the Ideas and/or Thinking of Pupils;

Giving Corrective Feedback to Pupils about their performances on content or skills that are to be acquired and/or practice; and

Building an Understanding, (i.e., creating a purposeful environment that promotes active learning and exposes pupils to intellectual challenges, providing for a deeper understanding of the featured concept, procedures, or process through effective thinking and/or questioning tactics).

These pedagogical moves are assumed to facilitate K-12 student learning.

The purpose of the action research video study was to collect baseline for the College's elementary teacher education program and to initiate programmatic change and improvement. Speculative comments made by the researchers who conducted the study indicate that the findings may have been the result of a candidates' (1) lack of in-depth knowledge of the content; (2) lack of ability to shape content in such a way so as to enable the formulation of higher-order questions; (3) lack of opportunities to acquire and practice such pedagogical skills in school settings; and (4) lack of understanding of the relationship between higher-order questions and higher-order thinking. Subsequently, the researchers recommended that the designers of the program should include, prior to student teaching, more course work and clinical practice for teacher candidates to develop competence in these pedagogical areas. Also, the researchers of that study suggested that teacher candidates should develop a greater depth of understanding of the content that is to be learned by students in schools so that their ability to give corrective feedback and to ask higher-order questions might, perhaps, improve.

Finally, it appears that *professional confidence* -- either as a desirable trait for the next generation of teachers to possess or as an area of competence teacher candidates at the College need to develop -- may be significantly influenced by

- the extent to which a teacher candidate knows the content of school-curricular;
- the extent to which a candidate can shape and deliver content so that it is learned by diverse populations of students;
- the amount and quality of the field-clinical experiences a candidate has at the initial level of teacher certification;
- the degree to which course work at the College and field experiences at schools are coordinated and focused on having the candidate practice those skills that are agreed upon by the College's professional community; and
- the candidate's own personal self-image.

The findings and recommendations from the school-college action research video study coupled with findings from this study hold great promise for providing information to initiate and implement programmatic change and improvement.

Final Comment and Analysis of Preliminary Findings

It is clear that the College's internal and external partners share a **vision of a teacher who is professionally confident, can write and speak English fluently, is compassionate, and**

one who possesses in-depth knowledge of content and pedagogy. Participants in focus groups perceived many skills and "knowledges" connected to one another and contributing to a larger area of competence or trait. For example, participants saw candidates having in-depth knowledge of diverse student populations and the pedagogical skill to work with diverse populations as contributing to a candidate becoming a compassionate teacher who respects all children. Skills and knowledge were embedded in larger entities and often linked to recommendations for changing and improving aspects of the teacher education program. For example, the development of oral and written communication skills coupled with the acquisition of content knowledge was seen to contribute to a candidate's ability to communicate content effectively in K-12 classrooms. This in turn was then linked to recommendations requesting that the College (1) offer remedial work for candidates to improve communication skills, and (2) provide opportunities during field experiences for candidates to practice, develop and demonstrate their ability to deliver content effectively. The context was a trait, attribute or an area of competence from which enabling skills, knowledge, and learning experiences were identified and then placed in a supporting role. The follow-up questionnaire provided an opportunity for participants to rethink or reinforce responses that were given to questions -- with the benefit of having heard a group discussion on the matter. There is no doubt that during discussions of question #5 emphasis was placed on traits rather than specific knowledge or skills. Such traits as "a good work ethic," "a passion for teaching," "dedication to the profession," "being professionally responsible," and "respect for students," were repeated and emphasized among, between and within groups of partners. Thus, according to our partners these traits are most important for the next generation of quality teachers to possess. An updated version of the School of Education's **conceptual framework** incorporating many of the major ideas generated by our partners was prepared and submitted to NCATE on September 15, 2002 (see Abramson, Catelli, Corrigan, Craven, Dillon, Payne, Schlichting, Stracher, & Thornton, 2002).

The ultimate goal of this action-oriented research project is to arrive at a shared vision of a quality teacher and to institute substantial changes in the education of quality professionals. Future research projects should be aimed at sustained partnering work directed at improving teacher education and effecting K-12 student learning. The importance of such projects lie in the notion that if this next phase of teacher education reform and institutional accountability is to be successful, and if we are to realize our goal to prepare quality teachers, in a more collaborative

manner, then a more systematic and action-oriented research approach is needed. Further, the significance of this project, although small in size, is its contribution to the growing literature and research on change and the improvement in teacher education.

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Appendix A

Figures 1, 2 and 3 For
The School-College Action Research Project on What is Important in Preparing Future Teachers

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Flyer

Draft
Spring 2002

Dowling College

About
Dowling College

Dowling is an independent, comprehensive coeducational College.

Known as the "The Personal College," Dowling offers its undergraduate and graduate students an education of excellence in a context that is friendly and supportive. Its mission is to bring out the very best in each student through a sound academic curriculum, inspired teaching and an environment that accommodates and celebrates individual career aspirations.

Founded in 1955, Dowling serves 6700 full-time and part-time students. The College's Rudolph Campus is located on the south shore of western Suffolk County and its Brookhaven Center is situated on 105 acres in central Suffolk County.

Drawn primarily from Long Island, with an increasingly national scope of recruitment, the student body reflects ethnic and racial diversity along with a constituency of international students from 59 countries.

Accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the College graduates 1500 students annually from its undergraduate and graduate degree programs and doctoral program in Education Administration.

ENVISION AN INNOVATIVE FUTURE

DEVELOPING "QUALITY" PROFESSIONALS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

DOWLING COLLEGE -- SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Dowling College's School of Education has embarked on a new era in education and teacher education. In an atmosphere of education renewal and innovation, our work is directed at developing quality professionals who will transform the lives of individuals, improve education, and positively affect organizational and educational systems.

Our continuum of innovative and coherent programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels prepare individuals to serve **5 New Professional Roles** in the 21st century. Referred to as

Dowling's F I R S T --
A Spectrum of New Professional Roles:

LEADERSHIP — INNOVATION

Eacilitator of Student Learning;

Institutional, Organizational, or Curriculum Leader;

Researcher-Change Agent;

Scholar-Artist;

Teacher Educator and Mentor.

COMPASSION — JUDGMENT

The spectrum of roles as well as the professional standards, knowledge, and skills associated with each role form the core around which professional certification and advanced leadership education revolve. **Leadership**, **innovation**, **compassion** and **judgment** are the traits and dispositions that are emphasized across roles and throughout an individual's professional education at Dowling College. Lifelong learning and continuing professional education are the focal points of the programs. In collaboration with our formal partners, we will develop and assure quality professionals. Our mission is to improve education on all levels, strengthen education in New York State, and promote successful professional practices in a variety of settings - i.e., schools, organizations, social service and government agencies, etc.

Assuring Academic Excellence, Professional Quality and Successful Partnerships
Dowling College, School of Education's Conceptual Frame - National Council For Accreditation Of Teacher Education (NCATE)

THE DOWLING COLLEGE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION (SOE): A NEW ERA

OUR VISION-MISSION

The vision of the School of Education is to become a premiere teaching-learning organization. In the context of education reform-renewal, the School of Education will take a leadership role to become known as

- *a regional leader* in the advancement of P-18 systems of education and educational programs;
- *a future-oriented organization* devoted to personalized teaching and lifelong learning in newly designed digital and classroom environments;
- *a catalyst structure* for systemic change and improvement for schools, social service and government agencies; and
- *an innovative education laboratory* nationally and internationally recognized for designing and researching new forms of education and teacher education directed at student learning.

Our mission is to prepare and educate "quality" professionals -- teachers, researchers, and leaders for schools, organizations, social and government agencies. Collectively, our work is directed at educating individuals to serve in new professional roles in the 21st century for

- strengthening the region of Long Island;
- improving education at both the school (P-12) and college (13-18) levels;
- strengthening education in New York State; and
- conducting successful professional practices in institutional or organizational settings.

In the coming years we will conduct meaningful scholarship, effective research, and successful partnership relationships directed at student learning, systemic change, and educational improvement. Woven throughout our mission and vision is our commitment to the preservation of democratic ideals and the advancement of social justice in a diverse America.

OUR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

In collaboration with faculties of the liberal arts and sciences and faculties in partnering schools, our innovative and coherent set of programs prepare and develop quality professionals to serve in new professional roles. This preparation and advanced education of "quality" professionals requires

- a rigorous education in the liberal arts and sciences;
- an in-depth understanding of human development and learning;
- an intense focus on pedagogy, pedagogical-content knowledge and professional knowledge;
- a special emphasis on field and clinical work; and
- an accentuation on research, theory, and theory into practice.

Newer technologies are integrated in an individual's education. All programs for the preparation and advanced education of quality professionals are outcome-based, requiring individuals to perform competencies and/or proficiencies.

A SPECTRUM AND CONTINUUM OF 5 NEW PROFESSIONAL ROLES IN THE 21st CENTURY

Dowling's First	Initial Professional Level
• Facilitator of Student Learning	- Successfully implement researched models of teaching-learning. Design well-managed innovative digital and classroom learning environments that positively impact student learning, and that develop diverse populations of students as lifelong learners. Conduct meaningful work with families and demonstrate professional judgment and compassion in work with students, parents, professors, peers and colleagues.
	Advanced Professional Levels
• Institutional, Organizational, or Curriculum Leader	- Lead or participate in the re-creation of school-curriculum, schools, institutions, and agencies as caring learning communities and organizations. Contribute to the development and governance of newly formed partnerships, intra-and-inter-institutional structures and/or models of continuous analysis, improvement, leadership, and reform.
	Advanced Professional Levels
• Researcher and Change Agent	- Experiment with newer forms of education, governance and change strategies for meaningful innovation and/or improvement. Conduct research or action research projects directed at student learning and achievement, educational and/or institutional change and improvement, or research for comprehensive change and improvement of a school district, social or governmental agency, or research for strengthening a region.
	Advanced Professional Levels
• Scholar-Artist	- Engage in "collaborative inquiry" to produce creative and innovative scholarship or works that are articulated and disseminated to peers, colleagues and/or disseminated to local and national education communities.
	Advanced Professional Levels
• Teacher Educator and Mentor	- Serve as tutors, mentors, instructors or clinical personnel at varying levels of professional education. Conducting course, field and learning modules.

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Figure 2. Questionnaire for the School-College Partnership Action Research Project: Assuring Academic Excellence, Professional Quality and Successful Partnerships – School of Education's Conceptual Frame- NCATE

Focus Questions/ Responses

Name of School/District_____

or

Position at the College or School_____

1. What entrance criteria should we use to admit students to the teacher education programs?
2. What are the prerequisites to student teaching?
3. What specifically must a student teacher be able to do in order to be successful in your classroom with your students? And what must a student teacher do to successfully complete a student teaching experience.
4. In your opinion, what are the most important factors that influence P-12 student learning? What is the role of the principal in facilitating student learning? What is the role of the college supervisor in facilitating student learning?
5. What are five skills, abilities and/or traits that are most important for the next generation of teachers to develop and why?
6. Can criteria be identified to determine if a student teacher is "tenerable" during his or her student teaching experience? If yes, please identify the criteria.
7. What do students need to develop in order to function successfully in this century?
8. What criteria or standards should we use to select
    (a) our partner schools?
    (b) cooperating teachers?
    (c) school principals?
    (d) college supervisors?
    (e) our part-time college teacher education instructors?
9. What ultimately would determine the College you choose to partner with? What expectations do you have of the College in a partnership endeavor?
10. What questions do you have that we should address at our next meeting?

Figure 3.

Composition of Focus Groups and Samples of Selected Responses

The information presented in this Figure was obtained from six (6) focus group sessions that took place during the Dowling College NCATE Partnership Meetings as well as from questionnaires completed by invited persons and/or participants of the focus groups conducted for the project. A total of 123 (N=123) individuals participated in the focus groups. Italicized words and phrases signify comments and responses that were repeated within or across groups of participants.

I. The First Dowling College School-College Partnership Meeting -- April 9, 2002
Number of Participants (N=34)

School Partners
- 8 Principals
- 14 Teachers
- 2 School Administrators (i.e., personnel officers)
- 2 Superintendents/Assistant Superintendents

College Partners
- 2 College Administrators
- 3 College Staff
- 3 College Faculty

What are five skills, abilities and/or traits that are most important for the next generation of teachers to develop?

Administrator Responses	Teacher Responses	
.Inquisitiveness	.Designing effective lesson plans	.Takes initiative
.Passion for teaching	.Aware of demographics	.Understands educational/social/ emotional needs of children *Is compassionate*
.Skill and ability to learn and collaborate with others	.Professional development- lifelong learner	*.Enthusiastic and love of teaching and kids*
.Work with diverse populations i.e. ESL	.Widely read in children's literature	.Willingness to learn from experienced staff members
.Work with differentiated learning styles	.Behavior management skills	.Time management
.Good writing skills	*.Technology skills*	.Ability to summarize
.Good verbal communication skills	.Extensive core knowledge	.Flexible
.Flexibility and eagerness to learn. *Confident*	.Knowledge of psychology and sociology skills	.Organizational skills
.Good communication skills	*.Excellent oral and written communication skills*	*.Committed/Dedicated*
.Knowledgeable and an education leader	.Multiple certifications	*.Mature and confident*
.Good character- good role model	*.Dependable/Confident*	*.High level of professionalism*
.Organizational skills		*.Good work ethic*
.Humanistic traits, *caring*		.Dependable
		.Takes initiative
		.Responsible
		.Respect for all learners

II. The Dowling College Partnership Meeting -- April 17, 2002
Number of Participants (N=12)

College Partners
- 3 Field Supervisors
- 5 Adjunct Professors
- 1 College Administrator
- 1 College Staff
- 2 College Faculty

What are five skills, abilities and/or traits that are most important for the next generation of teachers to develop?

.Classroom management	.High educational standards and knowledgeable	*.Good work ethic*
.Love of children	*.Compassionate*	*.Good writing skills*
.Ability to present information	.Academic excellence	.Good diagnostic skills
.Ability to make children feel good about school	*.Technologically proficient*	.Human relations skills
.A deep respect for youngsters	*.Dedication to teaching*	.Humility
.A powerful desire to impact students positively	.Intra and inter personal skills	*.Communication skills*
.Technology skills	*.Ability to communicate*	.Media evaluation skills
.Management skills	.Knowledge of subject	.Insights into cause-and-effect relationships
.Second language skills	*.Compassion for others*	.Awareness of student learning styles
.Ability to work with children with disabilities	*.Good work ethic*	*.Be able to work with inclusion students and differentiated curriculum*
	.Ability to keep up with research	.Ability to prepare students for mandated tests without giving up creative teaching
	.Skill in the use of technology	
	.Acceptance of children's individual differences	
	.Good collaborative skills	

III. The Dowling College Partnership Meeting –Special Education -- April 22, 2002
Number of Participants (N=22)

College Partners
- 18 Adjunct Professors
- 4 College Faculty

What are five skills, abilities and/or traits that are most important for the next generation of teachers to develop?

.Team player	.Competence in: writing lesson plans and reports, reading, interpersonal *communication skills*, speaking for class presentations	.Knowledge of explicit and implicit teaching styles
.Reliable		.Creative writer
.Responsible/Caring		.Good listener
.Understanding of learning styles		.Active researcher
.Behavior management skills	*.Speaking and writing skills*	.Well-organized
.Ability to question on a meta-cognitive level	.Flexible but Confident	.Avid reader
.Higher-order thinking skills	*.Acceptance of students and families of different ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic levels*	*.Competence in verbal skills*
.Ability to interact with people in a positive, supportive and warm manner		*.Competence in written communication skills*
.Knows the NYS Standards	.Thorough knowledge of subject matter	.Understanding of how learning takes place
	.Broader background in the arts	.Ability to work in a collaborative environment

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IV. The President's Education Consultation Council Meeting -- May 2, 2002
Number of Participants (N=22)

School Partners

1	BOCES Administrator
1	Member of the NYS Council of School Superintendents
4	School Administrators
2	Teachers

Partners

1	NYS Assemblyman
5	College Administrators
5	College Faculty
2	College Staff
1	Education Consultant to the President

What are five skills, abilities and/or traits that are most important for the next generation of teachers to develop?

.Content knowledge
.Enthusiasm/appreciation of subject matter
.Compassionate and caring
.Technologically proficient
.Ability to relate to others (particularly school children)
.Competent enough in subject areas to change teaching method
.Ability to use technology effectively
.Understands the governance process
.Ability to write and speak clearly
.Agreement with program to select appropriate teaching techniques
.Teaching competence and confidence
.Familiarity with technology
.Knowledge of the learning standards
.Development of good critical thinking skills
.Good communication and interpersonal skills
.Ability to relate to kids
.Can assess student learning
.Professionally confident
.Good classroom management/discipline skills
.Compassion and *respect for all*
.Knowledge of subject matter
.Knowing how and when to move on to the next topic
.Articulate and able to motivate others
.Be a reflective teacher
.Strong verbal ability
.Strong content knowledge
.Digital competence
.Good questioning techniques

V. The Dowling College Leadership-Partnership Meeting -- May 23, 2002
Number of Participants (N=3)

1	Principal (Middle School)
2	Principals (Elementary)

What are five skills, abilities and/or traits that are most important for the next generation of <u>principals</u> to develop?

.Innovative instructional leader- be able to look for new ideas and be able to change (keep up with the times, be a lifelong learner)
.Interpersonal relationship skills with parents and students
.Tolerance for stress
.Political sense
.Good political sense
.Openly communicates
.Understands the role of administrator, teacher, and board member
.Understands teachers and teaching
.Can effectively interact with board members
.Is productive
.Is an agent of change
.Ability to be a jack-of-all trades
.Knows the legal aspects of day-to-day operations (custody issues, medical issues, safety issues, maintenance issues, etc.)
.Learns to use resources at his/her disposal
.Public relations skills/ marketing skills
.Delegation skills
.Is savvy and sensitive
.Works well with students and faculty
.Operates an effective secretarial staff
.Is a good team builder
.Knows the nature of the position
.Is definitive and open
.Knows greater needs of the students
.Highly respected by educators and parents
.Can secure resources
.Works well under stress
.Good instructional leader
.Knows legal information
.Good under stress
.Works toward a vision
.Has a strong vision
.Knows power bases in community and how to coalesce with a community
.Deals well with parents
.Can effectively "multi-task"

VI. Dowling College - Academic Convocation (Breakout Group A)-- November 14, 2001
Number of Participants N=30

Topic: The Vision-Mission of the School of Education (SOE).

Thirty (30) participants were asked to rank descriptor statements of what the SOE wants to be known for and as in the coming years.

Thirty (N=30) participants ranked the vision-mission statements cited below from 1 to 4 with 1 as the most important and 4 as the least important descriptor. The number on the left represents the results in priority order.

__2__ A "regional leader" in the advancement of prekindergarten to 12th grade school and college systems of education and educational programs in teacher education and educational leadership.

__4__ A "future-oriented organization" devoted to personalized teaching and life-long learning in newly designed digital and classroom environments.

__3__ A "catalyst structure" for systemic change and educational improvement on both the school (preK-12) and college (13-18) levels.

__1__ An "innovative education laboratory" nationally recognized for designing and researching new and integrative forms of education and teacher education directed at student learning and achievement.

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Findings

Preliminary findings reveal that in sample responses to the question -- **What are five skills and/or traits that are most important for the next generation of teachers to develop and demonstrate?** -- both internal and external partners repeatedly identified the following as most important:

- **The ability to speak and write English fluently.**
- **Professional confidence.**
- **The ability to present oneself in an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and self-assured or confident manner.**
- **A good work ethic.**
- **Be able to work with all students from diverse backgrounds.**
- **An ability to communicate content effectively.**
- **Be or become conversant with newer technologies.**
- **Demonstrate a passion for teaching, and a genuine respect and love for students.**
- **Be responsible and professionally dedicated.**
- **Be compassionate.**

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